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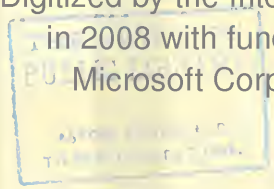

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C. Van Rensselaer

Memorial

OF

CORTLANDT VAN RENSSELAER.

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1860.

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MEMORIAL.

LETTER FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

To the Rev. Cortlandt Van Rensselaer, D.D.

Beloved Brother in Christ Jesus: The General Assembly has learned with deep solicitude of the afflictive dispensation which detains you from its present sessions. It has pleased Him whose "way is in the sea, and His path in the great waters," to visit you with a painful illness. We cannot permit you to suppose that the Church which you have loved and served so well is unmindful of you in this season of trial. And we would do injustice to ourselves not to assure you of our united and cordial sympathy.

We are well aware that one who feels himself drawing near to eternity, and around whose couch of suffering the light of that "better country" is shedding its heavenly radiance, can stand in no need of earthly consolations. Nor would we offend your Christian humility by enlarging upon the services you have rendered to the cause of Christ. But we may, nay, we must magnify the grace of God in you, which has wrought so effectually to the furtherance of the Gospel amongst us through your instrumentality. We cannot accept your resignation of the important office you have just relinquished, without bearing our formal and grateful testimony to the manner in which its duties have been performed. With devout thankfulness to God, and under Him, beloved brother, to you, we record our sense of the eminent wisdom, fidelity and efficiency, and the noble, disinterested liberality with which you

have for fourteen years conducted the affairs of our "Board of Education."

Under your administration it has risen from a condition of comparative feebleness to strength and power. Its plans have been matured and systematized. Its sphere has been greatly enlarged. It has assumed new and most beneficent functions. Your luminous pen has vindicated the principles which lie at the basis of true Christian education. And by your numerous publications, your sermons and addresses, your extended correspondence and your self-denying activity in visiting every part of the Church, you have, by God's blessing, accomplished a great work in elevating this sacred cause to its just position, and gathering around it the sympathies of our whole communion. Nor may we forbear to add, that in prosecuting these manifold official labours, you have greatly endeared yourself personally to the ministry and membership of the Church.

Rejoicing as we do in the auspicious results of these unwearied exertions, we mourn this day the sacrifice they have cost us. While the Church is reaping the harvest—a harvest which we fully believe she will go on gathering until the Master comes to present her unto himself, a glorious Church—the workman who has done so much to prepare the ground and sow the seed, falls exhausted in the furrows. There, dear brother, we doubt not you would choose to fall—upon that field, to the culture of which you have dedicated your life.

On behalf of the Church we represent, we once more thank you sincerely and gratefully for all your labours and sacrifices. We lift up our hearts in humble and fervent supplication to our common God and Father, that his presence may be with you in this hour of trial. We hear with joy that he does not forget you; that he is giving you strength according to your day; and that your peace flows like a river. We plead with him, that if it be possible, this blow may be still averted, and your health restored. But we desire to commit you into his hands. That Saviour in whom you trust will not forsake you. The divine Comforter will comfort you and *yours*. Your covenant God will be the God of your children.

To him, the Triune Jehovah, we affectionately commend you; praying that his rod and his staff may comfort you; and whenever

the summons shall come, an entrance may be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

On behalf of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in session at Rochester, New York, May 23, 1860.

JOHN W. YEOMANS, *Moderator.*

WILLIS LORD, *Stated Clerk.*
ALEXANDER T. MCGILL, *Permanent Clerk.*
A. G. VERMILYE, *Temporary Clerk.*

This letter was signed by the officers of the Assembly, by its members individually, and by many others, not members, who were present at its session.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

At a special meeting of the Presbyterian Board of Education, held on the 27th ult., James Dunlap, Esq., one of the Vice-Presidents, in the chair, and the Rev. Robert Watts, Secretary, the following preamble and resolutions, offered by the Rev. Mr. Watts, were adopted, viz.:

Whereas, The Board of Education having received intelligence of the decease of their late beloved Corresponding Secretary, the Rev. Cortlandt Van Rensselaer, D.D., at his residence in Burlington, New Jersey, and being specially convened in reference to this heavy affliction, therefore

Resolved, 1. That it is with deep sorrow they have heard of this bereavement—a bereavement which, in its painfully apprehended approach, has filled their hearts with sadness, and which now, in its actual occurrence, has produced a feeling of still deeper grief, and a still keener sense of loss.

Resolved, 2. That the Board hereby make record of their gratitude to God for his goodness in bestowing upon the Church and the cause of Education one so highly gifted, and in sparing him until he had aroused the Church to a right estimate of the interests at stake in the Christian training of her beloved youth.

Resolved, 3. That whilst the Board acutely feel and mourn their loss, they bow submissively and with acquiescence to the sovereign will of the All-wise Redeemer, recognizing his right to order all the affairs of his Church according to the counsel of his own will, and acknowledging his grace and faithfulness to his servant in the abounding consolations and unwavering assurance wherewith he filled his heart through all the vicissitudes of a wasting disease, and in the tender compassion wherewith he at length so gently unlocked the earthly tenement.

Resolved, 4. That this Board tender their kindest, deepest sym-

pathies to the bereaved wife and family of their departed brother, and that they be furnished with a copy of these resolutions.

Resolved, 5. That the Board will, in a body, attend the funeral services, to be held at Burlington, and that a committee, consisting of Rev. William S. Plumer, D.D., John C. Backus, D.D., Rev. Robert Watts, Hon. George Sharswood, and James Dunlap, Esq., be deputed to accompany the beloved dust to its resting-place in the family vault at Albany.

JAMES DUNLAP, *Vice-President.*

ROBERT WATTS, *Secretary.*

FUNERAL ADDRESS.

Delivered in the First Presbyterian Church, Burlington, New Jersey, on the 30th of July, 1860.

By the Rev. Charles Hodge, D.D.

The death of Cortlandt Van Rensselaer has sent a wave of sorrow over our whole land. There is scarcely a congregation in our widely extended Church in which his loss will not be felt as a calamity. His official duties brought him into contact with almost every Presbytery, and demanded his presence at every General Assembly, while his personal qualities secured the confidence and love of all who were thus brought to know him. It is not, therefore, unaccountable that the relation which he sustained to our Church was altogether peculiar. Of our nearly three thousand ministers, there is not one who was the object of so much personal confidence and affection; not one whose face was familiar to so many persons, or who had effected a lodgment in so many hearts. Our last General Assembly, embracing more than three hundred members, gathered from every State of the Union (excepting three), addressed a letter to Dr. Van Rensselaer, then upon his dying bed, expressing their sorrows for his affliction, and their high estimate of his worth and services. That letter was heard in the midst of tears and sighs. It was adopted by the whole Assembly rising to their feet, when the oldest minister present gave utterance in prayer to the feelings which swelled every heart. This is an incident unprecedented in our history. No other man was ever so honoured. It was a tribute not to greatness, but to goodness. It was rendered cordially: no man faltered in his assent; no man doubted that it was a well-earned testimony to a beloved and faithful servant of the Church. We do not, however, assert any exclusive denominational claim to our lamented brother;

nor do we assume that sorrow for his loss is confined to the members of his own communion. He was a catholic Christian. He embraced in his love all the followers of our common Lord, and, in return, all classes of Christians to whom he was known regarded him with affectionate confidence, and mingle their tears with ours over his grave. No trait of his character was more conspicuous, as this community can testify, than this genuine catholicity. He loved his Saviour's image wherever he caught its reflection.

Our lamented brother was the son of the Hon. Stephen Van Rensselaer and Cornelia Paterson. These are historical names, the one in New York, the other in New Jersey. He was born in the city of Albany, May 26th, 1808. He graduated at Yale College in 1827. He was admitted to the Bar in his native State in 1830. The same year, having decided to devote his life to the work of the ministry, he entered the Theological Seminary at Princeton, New Jersey. He was ordained to the sacred office in 1835, and commenced his ministry in preaching to the coloured population in Virginia. Circumstances beyond his control, constrained him to leave that chosen field of labour, and, in 1837, he was installed the pastor of this church.* In 1847 he was chosen Corresponding Secretary, and principal executive officer of the Board of Education, under the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in which service he continued to the end of his laborious life. This is a brief record of the more important dates in his professional history. The details of his inward and outward life cannot, of course, be expected on this occasion.

The word which spontaneously rises to every lip, in the contemplation of the character and life of our departed brother, is but the echo of those from the lips of Christ, which, we are all assured, greeted his disembodied spirit: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of the Lord."

The word *good* is used in manifold senses, but they all fall under two heads: first, that is good which is what God designed it to be; which has the qualities or attributes which fit it for its appointed sphere. In that sense, all creatures, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, as they proceeded from the hand of God, were pronounced very good. But, secondly, *good* means suitable,

* First Presbyterian Church, Burlington, New Jersey.

agreeable, useful, or beneficent. Thus we say, a good tree, good fruit, good works, a good man. That is good which does good. In the absolute sense of the word, that only is good which is free, not only from defect, but from limitation. The Infinite alone is good. Therefore, as our Lord says, "There is none good but one —that is God." He only is good essentially, immutably, and infinitely; and he only is the ultimate and original source of all goodness to be found in creatures. This infinite or absolute goodness appeared on earth, clothed in a pure humanity, and now exalted to celestial beauty and glory. Recognizing the truth of our Lord's declaration, that God only is absolutely good in himself, and the source of goodness in all others, we may, in accordance with Scriptural language, speak of a man as good, who is measurably in himself what he ought to be, and who does good to others; who has not self for his object; but who sacrifices self for the improvement or happiness of his fellow-men. In this sense, CORTLANDT VAN RENSSELAER was pre-eminently good. He was a good son and brother; a good husband and father; a good citizen, neighbour, and friend; a good minister, and a good Christian. A man who sustains well all these relations, who so acts in them all as to make himself a source of improvement and happiness to those with whom he is connected, may well be called a good man. Such are the infirmities of natural disposition in most men—such the weakness of the principle of grace, that it is rare that even sincere Christians can be called good, in this wide sense of the word. They are good in that they strive to keep the commandments of God, and in that they feel the power of the truth. They are good God-ward rather than man-ward. They are not good in the sense of being amiable, kind, beneficent. They are not centres whence good radiates; they are not the dispensers of happiness in the spheres in which they move. They are often selfish, irascible, penurious, or unfeeling. Such men may be saved, but as by fire. It is no common praise, therefore, when we say CORTLANDT VAN RENSSELAER was a good man; right in himself, and a source of good to all about him.

He was faithful as well as good. This, again, is a word of wide import. He is faithful who exercises faith, or is a believer; as when we speak of the faithful; who is worthy of faith, as when it is said, God is faithful; and who manifests fidelity in the discharge

of duty, as when we speak of a faithful servant. Dr. Van Rensselaer was faithful, because he had faith,—that greatest gift of God to man. He believed God's word. He held that great Augustinian system of doctrine therein revealed, which underlies the religion of the Church. He had his full share of inward conflict —that conflict which arises from the difficulty of reconciling the teachings of the Spirit in his word, and in the hearts of his people, with the conclusions of natural reason. But he came off a victor in that struggle, and learned how to bring down every proud thought and every high imagination to the obedience of the faith. Much as true Christians may appear to differ in their theology, they all agree in their religion; and their religion is only the subjective effect of the same glorious truths, objectively revealed in the word, which truths, therefore, all the true children of God really embrace.

The doctrine of the Trinity, on which the whole scheme of redemption is founded: the doctrine of the supreme divinity and perfect humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the great object of Christian faith and worship; the doctrine of the native depravity and helplessness of fallen man; of gratuitous acceptance with God, through the righteousness of Christ; of regeneration and sanctification by the power of the Holy Ghost; the doctrine that God is a sovereign, working all things after the counsel of his own will; that salvation is a matter of grace in its inception, progress, and consummation; the doctrine of the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body, and eternal judgment: these are doctrines which, however they be wrought up into systems of theology, constitute the basis of the religious experience of all true Christians, of every name and denomination. To these doctrines our brother was faithful; sincerely believing them, openly professing them, and proclaiming them from the pulpit and the press, from the beginning to the end of his professional life. He was no less faithful to his principles—always ready to declare them: never forsaking them for any consideration of expediency, so that he could always be relied upon. No one was ever disappointed in looking for his support in behalf of any principle or measure to which he stood committed. He was faithful also to all his obligations, in the cultivation of his talents, in the employment of his time, turning every day to account, in the use of his wealth, avoid-

ing all expenses for personal habits, living unostentatiously, distributing to every good enterprise, dispensing his charities abundantly but silently, not letting his left hand know what his right did. No attribute of Dr. Van Rensselaer's character was more conspicuous than his fidelity. He was a thoroughly sincere, honest, reliable, conscientious man, incapable of any dishonourable underhanded course of action, true to his principles, to his friends, and his Divine Master.

He was in the true sense of the word a servant. This was the favourite designation of the Apostles. Paul called himself habitually the servant of Jesus Christ. He desired to be so regarded, and to live in accordance with the relation indicated by the word in its strongest sense. So did our departed friend. He was the servant of Christ, because he was his property—the purchase of his blood. He was not his own master; he belonged to him who had loved him and given himself for him. The will of Christ, and not his own will, became the authoritative rule of his life; and the service of Christ, the promotion of his kingdom and glory, the end to which he consecrated all his energies. This service comprehended everything—the homage of the understanding, the subjection of the conscience, the devotion of the heart, and the conduct of the life. Not merely religious duties, but all moral and social duties, are included in this service, for we are required to be subject unto men, to be truthful, pure, and benevolent, not as men-pleasers, but as serving the Lord.

In this service Dr. Van Rensselaer was indefatigable. He was one of the hardest-working men in the Church. He worked incessantly, even in the railroad car and the steamboat; sitting at the board of the Directors or of the Trustees, when nothing important demanded his attention, you would find him busily employed writing letters, making extracts from books, or taking notes for future use. He gave himself far too little rest. When he assumed the conduct of the Board of Education, its operations were confined to the support of candidates for the ministry. He probably increased his labours fourfold by including the organization and support of parochial schools, Presbyterial academies, and Synodical colleges. Not content with all this, he laboured incessantly with his pen. He published an annual volume of addresses and discourses on the general subject of Education; he originated and conducted a

monthly magazine, a work in itself almost enough to fill the hands of one person. He was constantly called upon to preach or to deliver public lectures in furtherance of the great cause in which he was embarked. All this service was rendered not only gratuitously, but at a large and constant pecuniary sacrifice. This activity continued to the last. When unable to leave his house, or even his bed, or to hold his pen, he still dictated, and employed the last remnants of his life and strength in devising or recommending works of general utility. He was, therefore, truly a servant, a good and faithful servant, and he has now ceased from his labours and entered into the joy of the Lord.

"The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection." Such is the doctrine of our Lord. He tells us that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are now alive, because God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Lazarus, he tells us, was, at death, carried by angels to Abraham's bosom, and was there perfectly blessed. He said to the thief on the cross, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." And Paradise, Paul tells us, is the third heaven. The Apostle also teaches us that when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; and that he desired to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. But presence with the Lord is the believer's heaven; it is the highest conception he can form of blessedness; it is all that his soul desires. The state, therefore, which intervenes between death and the resurrection is not a state of unconsciousness. It is a state of complete glory and blessedness; complete, in the sense of being as great as the condition of a disembodied spirit is susceptible. There is to be a higher state, when Christ shall come a second time without sin unto salvation, when the dead in Christ shall rise first, and their bodies fashioned after his glorious body. It is a great consolation to Christians to know that those who depart in faith do thus immediately enter into the joy of the Lord.

The joy of the Lord is not that joy which he gives, but it is his joy—that which the Lord himself possesses. The Bible teaches us that Christ and his people are one—one in the sense in which Adam and his posterity, a vine and its branches, the head and

members of the human body, are one. This union is threefold. There is a federal or covenant union, founded on the counsels of eternity, in virtue of which Christ is the head and representative of his people; there is a vital union, arising from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of Christ, and there is a voluntary conscious union by faith. Those who are united to Christ as to be one with him, are so in such sense that his death is their death, his resurrection is their resurrection, and his exaltation and glorification are theirs. They are to sit with him in heavenly places. They are to reign with him. They are to be glorified together. "The glory," says our blessed Lord to the eternal Father, "which thou hast given me I have given them." In the second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews the Apostle teaches us that the dominion promised to man, to which the Psalmist refers when he says, "Thou hast put all things under his feet," has no limitation, God himself excepted; that in the person of Christ, and in union with him, his people are to be exalted to universal dominion. They are to reign with Christ. "Know ye not," says Paul, "that we are to judge angels." The joy, therefore, into which our brother has entered is the inconceivable glory which the Lord has. It is,

1. The joy of victory. Christ assumed our nature in order that he might, by death, destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil. He came into the world, as he himself says, to destroy the works of the Devil. He conquered all his and our enemies on the cross; and as he rose, all the angelic hosts shouted for joy, and said, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in." In this victory all his people share. They escape as a bird out of the hand of the fowler. They are delivered from the power of Satan: he can no longer tempt, afflict, much less destroy. They are freed from the condemnation of the law; they have escaped from the wrath to come. They are victors, not only over Satan's power, but, so to speak, through Christ's blood, over God's justice. They are delivered from the bondage of corruption, from the power of indwelling sin, from an evil heart of unbelief. They are more than conquerors, through Him who loved them. The highest earthly joy is that of the conqueror, when life, country, liberty, everything has been at stake. But the exultation which fills the

heart of the humblest believer, who feels himself at last a conqueror in the struggling for his soul over death and hell, can never be imagined until it is experienced. This triumph, and its consequent joy, into which the believer enters at death, is, however, not merely a triumph over his own spiritual enemies—the prize achieved is not merely his personal salvation—it is the triumph of light over darkness, of Christ over Satan, of the kingdom of God over the kingdom of Satan. It is a victory, the glorious consequences of which are to fill immensity and eternity. O, what a joy is that in which the believer enters when his soul rises from the field of conflict here, and joins the victorious hosts above!

2. The joy of the Lord is the joy of perfection. It became him, through whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many souls unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. This perfection to which Christ attained was the completion of the work of redemption for his people. The perfection to which his people attain is the completion of the work of redemption in themselves. It is restoration to the image of God. It is the perfection of their whole nature, including perfect knowledge. Now we see as through a glass, darkly; then shall we see face to face. Now we know in part; then we shall know even as we are known. A perfectly unclouded intellect, expanded to its fullest capacity, and filled with all knowledge, is one element of that perfection on which the believer enters at death. It is also a perfection in holiness, not only negative in entire freedom from sin, but positive in the highest exercise of all holy affections. It is a perfection of reconciliation and communion with God. The soul is filled with his fulness. It is filled with God. It is admitted to the beatific vision, to the unveiled manifestation of his glory, and to the unlimited communication and assurance of his love. These are words which neither you nor I can understand. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God hath prepared for those who love him." Beloved, we know not what we shall be; but we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

3. The joy of the Lord is, as we have seen, a joy of dominion. He has received a name which is above every name. He is exalted above all principalities, and thrones, and dominion. To him every

knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth. Of his dominion there is neither limit nor end. It is an everlasting kingdom. In this dominion his people share. Into the joy of this sovereignty they enter. What this means we need not care to know. It is enough that it means more than tongue can tell or heart conceive; that it includes glory, honour, and immortality; that it implies the constant, beneficent, and beatifying exercise of all our powers in the promotion of the highest glory of our Redeemer, the highest good of his kingdom.

Cortlandt Van Rensselaer has, then, entered into all this joy! O! couldst thou shed one beam of thy present glory on our tear-dimmed eyes, they would be dimmed no longer. They would be radiant with something of thy own brightness. Let us comfort ourselves with these words. Those who sleep in Jesus are with Jesus. The death of such a man is, indeed, to his family, to his friends, and to the Church, an irreparable loss. It is a great calamity, and it must be felt and grieved over as such, as long as we live. But our sorrow should be moderated, elevated, and sanctified by the remembrance of what, by the grace of God, he was and did, and by the consideration of what, by that same grace, he now is. The more we turn our minds and hearts toward heaven, the more shall we be reconciled to the increasing desolations around us on earth.

Let those of us who profess to be the servants of Christ, see to it that we are good and faithful. The name, or even the reputation will avail us little. If we are ever to enter into the joy of our Lord, we must be his servants, we must feel that we are not our own, that we belong to Christ. His will must control our conduct. It must be truly our purpose in life, not merely to live, not to advance our own interests or honour; we must sincerely live and labour for him. Otherwise, we shall see many come from the north, and the south, and enter into the joy of our Lord, and we ourselves be cast out. As far as we are concerned, there are two things which this sad occasion should impress deeply upon our hearts. The one is, the unprofitableness of our past lives. How little have we done! How have we failed in the character of good and faithful servants! The other is, the unspeakable importance of the time which may still be allotted to us. If we have as yet

done little, so much more is it necessary that we redouble our diligence in the future. Let us turn away from the grave of our honoured brother, humbled for the past, but animated with new zeal in the service of that Divine Master who admits the lowest of his faithful servants into his own abounding joy.

Every one here present must ask himself the question, "What shall it profit a man shall he gain the whole world, and yet lose his own soul?" Who would not rather live the most self-denying life, if he could only die the death of the righteous, rather than be clothed in purple, and fare sumptuously every day? The utter folly of living for ourselves or for the world, if it is learned anywhere, may be learned here. Be persuaded, then, my hearers, to give yourselves to Christ. You can do nothing to merit his favour, much less to merit heaven. But he will give you heaven as a gratuity, if you will only give him your hearts; if you believe his Gospel, enrol yourselves among his true worshippers, and devote yourselves, out of love, to his service.

DR. VAN RENSSELAER AS A PASTOR.

The concluding portion of a Sermon by Rev. JOHN CHESTER, from the text, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his;" preached in the Presbyterian Church, Burlington, N. J., August 5th, 1860.

THERE was no one in the Presbyterian Church more widely known, and whose usefulness was more generally appreciated, than DR. VAN RENSSELAER'S. But he was principally known as the useful and laborious Secretary of the Board of Education. There are, however, some to whose hearts he was endeared by the memory of another relation that he once sustained, namely, that of a Pastor; and his connection with the Presbyterian Church of Burlington is an interesting one, because it shows how faithfully he did the work of his Master, whether that work called him to a large or small sphere of Christian usefulness. It also enables those who were witnesses for years of his private life to testify that it was one which adorned the religion of Jesus.

The relations that DR. VAN RENSSELAER sustained to this church were threefold: First, as a pastor; second, as an active supporter; third, as one who felt a deep interest in its welfare, and whose counsels greatly contributed to its prosperity. The first relation continued but a few years, the last two continued to his dying hour.

His official connection with this Church began twenty-four years ago. There were then in Burlington but four churches. The number of the Presbyterians in the community was few, but these few desired to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience, and after the manner of their fathers. It was a marked Providence that DR. VAN RENSSELAER (then a young man, full of zeal, with ample means, and a heart ready to use them in his Master's service) should have had his steps directed to Burlington. Immediate steps were taken for the organization of a church.

This was done on July 7th, 1836, by the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia, nine persons being admitted as its members, and two ruling elders set apart for its officers. On August 2d, 1836, a formal call for his pastoral services was placed in the hands of Dr. Van Rensselaer, and accepted by him. His installation took place about a year afterwards, June 29th, 1837, though he had really performed pastoral duties from the commencement of the enterprise. On reviewing the four years of Dr. Van Rensselaer's pastoral connection with this church we find the following facts, which show how greatly it was blessed by the great Head of the Church.

During this time the church was fully organized, by having its officers appointed, and a flourishing Sabbath-school established. During the first year of his pastorate, the church edifice was completed, and dedicated to the service of God, on November 23d, 1837. It is an interesting fact that the sermon was preached by the Rev. Archibald Alexander, D.D. During the third year of his pastorate, the church was greatly blessed by an outpouring of the Spirit, God thus setting his seal of approbation to the undertaking by fulfilling his promise: "In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." During these four years, four missionaries had gone out from this church to foreign lands, one to India (Rev. Levi Janvier), two to Africa (Rev. Mr. Canfield and wife), one to the Sandwich Islands (Rev. S. C. Damon).

There were no objects that seemed to enlist the feelings and efforts of Dr. Van Rensselaer more than the young. This characteristic, which afterwards led him to take such interest in the educational institutions of the Church, was early displayed in the interest he took in the lambs of his flock. From the Sabbath-school then connected with the church, has been raised up many of its present teachers, and its present pastor.

On May 19th, 1840, Dr. Van Rensselaer announced to the Session his intention of requesting a dissolution of the pastoral relation. In the records of the Session is the following minute. "It is due to all parties to record the fact, that the request of the pastor arose from convictions of duty, especially in reference to another field of labour." Thus terminated a pastoral relation which had been greatly blessed, and whose influence is felt down

to the present day. When the eye of CORTLANDT VAN RENSSELAER first rested on the company of the redeemed, no doubt it beheld many who had been converted to God through his instrumentality, and who could now shine as stars in his crown of rejoicing.

After the dissolution of the pastoral relation, DR. VAN RENSSELAER still continued to be its active supporter. All acquainted with the facts will testify that no one was ever more willing to give of his substance. To the building of the church, to its enlargement, to the payment of its debts, to the support of its pastors, to its incidental expenditures and contributions, and to benevolent objects, he ever contributed with a liberal hand, and no man ever more literally fulfilled the divine command, "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." If all the recipients of his benefactions could this day testify, in the language of the prophet, "the very stones would cry out of the wall, and the beams out of the timber would answer."

But there was another support that he gave to this church, the loss of which falls heavily on both pastor and people. I refer to the testimony of his life and conversation to the truths of that holy religion which we profess and teach.

Almost every one can appreciate the influence the life of such a man has in convincing an ungodly world of the power of religion, but none but a pastor can fully realize how such a life strengthens his hands and encourages his heart. To know, that when he declared from God's word there was a power in religion to change the heart and to sanctify the life, here was one who afforded a living testimony to the truth uttered. To know, that if the ark of the Lord was in danger, there was one ready to step forward in its defence. Yes, a great source of consolation was to know that, from the altar of that heart, were constantly ascending prayers for the prosperity of Zion.

But what served to endear him most to the hearts of this people, was the readiness he ever evinced to assist by his counsel and efforts, whenever as a church they were called to pass through hours of trial. To specify every proof that he gave of this, would be impossible and unnecessary; but I am reminded of some facts which, as they are new to many present, may be now related.

During the early part of the year 1859, when this church was

scattered as a fold having no shepherd, in order to keep them together, he undertook the labour of the weekly evening services. The circumstances in which he was placed rendered this no light task. Though the duties of one of the most laborious offices in the Church were devolving upon him, and though there were other duties that required every spare moment of his time, yet, rather than let this church suffer for want of regular services, he once a week gathered its members together, and expounded to them the word of God. This was performed with such willingness, that hid the self-denial it cost, and with such ability, that none would have imagined the limited time he had for preparation. There are many of the sick, and aged, and the poor, who can testify that he was often found in their homes, relieving their necessities, reading to them words of comfort and counsel from the Bible, and offering up prayers by their beds of sickness.

Yes, that interest in this church continued to his dying hour. Rarely did I ever enter his sick-room (that sick-room which seemed a perfect Bethel, where God and his servant had such solemn interviews), but some question was addressed concerning the interests and prosperity of the church, showing that around it clustered his dying thoughts.

Yes, my hearers, a great man has fallen in Israel, and we have lost a great friend and support. But he has left behind an example for our imitation, he has given a testimony to the truth of a Christian hope, that should strengthen our faith. . . . . .

"And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; *and their works do follow them.*"

A DISCOURSE

COMMEMORATIVE OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE REV. CORTLANDT VAN RENSSELAER, D.D.

DELIVERED IN THE TENTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA, ON SUNDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 30TH, 1860.

BY HENRY A. BOARDMAN, D.D.

II TIMOTHY, 4 : 6–8 : "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing."

My absence from home, with the usual summer dispersion of my people, has obliged me to postpone until to-day the service I am about to perform. Those who have read the excellent address delivered by Professor Hodge, at the funeral solemnities in Burlington, on the 30th of July, together with the numerous articles in a kindred vein which have appeared in the newspaper press, may regard an exercise of this sort as superfluous. But CORTLANDT VAN RENSSELAER was my FRIEND. I knew him well, and to say this, is also to say, I loved him well, for thirty years: and I hope I shall not be thought to arrogate too much to myself, if I add, that he did not permit me to doubt whether my affection for him was in some measure reciprocated. With my precarious health, I had always expected it would devolve upon him (and the feeling had been more than once expressed), to say something from this pulpit about *me*. An inscrutable Providence has taken him, while I am left. Can I forbear to throw a single flower upon his grave?

This, indeed, is all I shall attempt. You must not look to me for an extended and formal discourse. Allow me, rather, to talk

with you familiarly for a while, about one whom you too knew and honoured, and whose death you have mourned as a public loss.

You are already apprised that Dr. Van Rensselaer was not originally intended for the ministry. When he graduated at Yale College, in 1827, although cherishing an hereditary reverence for the things of religion, he had not yet been taught those lessons which are to be learned only at the cross. His character was marked with the strength and dignity, the lofty sense of honour and the true generosity, for which he was distinguished through life. It was a noble stock to graft religion upon, but it was still "of the earth, earthy:"—the baptism of the spirit was yet to come. He had chosen his profession, and three years afterwards was admitted to the Bar.

Let us pause here for a moment. There are those who presume to press upon pious young men the claims of the other learned professions, by arguments disparaging to the sacred ministry. "Why should you not study law or medicine? Either of these would conduct you to honour and fame. And a Christian lawyer or physician may be quite as useful as a minister of the Gospel." This is the usual tenor of the appeal addressed to young men; and it is enforced by a reference to distinguished names belonging to the secular professions, as in contrast with the career of an obscure pastor, inadequately supported, and struggling with constant difficulties. I will not stop to expose the various fallacies involved in this reasoning. Let it suffice to refer to the case in hand, as a conclusive refutation of it. Suppose Cortlandt Van Rensselaer had continued at the Bar. We may concede all that the most sanguine friend might be disposed to claim in respect to the probable results. He would no doubt have placed himself in the front rank of his profession, and attained the honours which usually crown the successful advocate or jurist. But in summing up the fruits of such a career, how meagre must have been the inventory as compared with the results now before us! How much higher the ends for which he lived, how much purer and broader his influence upon our country and the world, how much more enduring the benefits he conferred upon his fellow-creatures, how much sweeter and holier the memories which cluster around his grave. What contemporary lawyer or statesman can be named, whose record, for the last quarter of a century, shines with a lustre like

his! Standing where we do to-day, there will be no one to question the wisdom of his decision in exchanging the law for the ministry.

His reasons for this change are briefly set forth in a letter to his honoured mother, written at Boston, September 10th, 1830, soon after he had been admitted to the New York Bar. There will be no violation of confidence in quoting a part of this letter: it may be of service to other young men placed in similar circumstances.

"This is not a sudden thought, nor the result of a capricious and unreflecting moment. I have deliberated much, and weighed the consequences. I can't reconcile my present course and profession with my views of duty. It is in vain that I imagine to myself that I am better qualified for public life and the contests of the political world. I feel their vanity and unsatisfying pleasures; and my mind is only at ease when I contemplate my future course as a course of usefulness in the immediate service of God.

"Who would have thought that I, the most unworthy of all your offspring, would ever have entertained serious thoughts of dedicating himself to his Maker? But my past life, foolish as it has been, ought not surely—nor will it—deter me from aiming at higher things. It is by the grace of God alone, that I am what I now am; and it is upon the same grace that I rely to bless and prosper my good intentions. The reasons which have influenced my mind in inducing me to abandon my present profession are these:

"1. I consider that every man is under obligations to his Maker, to pursue that course in life in which he thinks he can be most useful.

"2. A man of property, who has not the troubles and anxieties of business to divert his mind, is under *peculiar* obligations to make himself useful.

"3. I consider and firmly believe, that those men are the *happiest* who devote themselves most to God.

"4. My experience leads me to believe, that it is almost impossible for *me* to retain proper religious feelings, if I am occupied with the ordinary vanities and pursuits of the world." *

* I cannot forbear mentioning here an incident connected with the delivery of this

Such were the considerations employed by the providence and Spirit of God, to divert his servant from an honourable secular calling, to the most elevated and beneficent of all professions. The first two years of his theological course were spent at Princeton, and the third at the Union Seminary, in Virginia. It is worthy of note, that having, at the outset of his Christian life, imbibed some of the elements of what is still known as the "New Haven Theology," he adhered to these views through his entire seminary life. Neither Princeton nor Prince Edward could drive him from his entrenchments. Many a time did we contest this ground in our daily walks at Princeton; and while nothing could exceed the candour and good temper with which he defended his opinions, he clung to them with that tenacity which, then and always, constituted a marked feature of his character. But there was a sterner ordeal before him. In a private journal he closes his memoranda of the year 1836, by saying, that the year had been remarkable in his experience "for three things:" and the first of these was, "My renunciation of Taylorism." This occurred at the very opening of that year. His own account of the change, as I received it from his lips, was condensed into a single sentence: "As soon as I got into the field, I found that the system was not a practical one: I could not *work* with it; and I had to throw it all away." This was no less characteristic than the persistency with which he had previously cherished it. The moment he discovered that his elaborate and polished armour was more for show than for service, he said as David did, when Saul had arrayed him in his own ponderous coat of mail for his duel with the Philistine, "I cannot go with this." And he "put it off him," and never put it on again. This passage in his history may serve to explain, on the one hand, the affection with which he cherished, to his last hour, the ancient faith; and, on the other, the intrepidity and skill he displayed in combating the specious system which had for a time ensnared him.

discourse. About half an hour before the service, there was placed in my hands a letter of my own to my friend, written in pencil, on board a North River steamboat, six weeks after the date of the above letter to his mother (October 20th, 1830). The object of this letter was to inform him that I was just leaving home to enter the Theological Seminary; to urge him to decide the question, which I knew he was pondering, in favour of the Ministry; and to beg him to join me at Princeton—which he did a few weeks afterwards.

The field upon which he tested the validity of his theological creed, deserves attention; for it presents his character to us in one of its most interesting aspects.

You will understand me when I say, that there was no subject upon which he felt more deeply, than the condition of our coloured population. From first to last, throughout his entire ministry, he was the zealous, enlightened, generous friend of the African race. He wrote to me on this subject, with much feeling, from the Union Seminary, in January, 1833, while I was still at Princeton. And, again, in the ensuing March, while he was on a tour through the Carolinas and the Southwestern States, I received a long letter from him, urging me to come and take charge of an important church in one of the Southern capitals. Rebutting anticipated objections (for I had not written to him on the subject), he says, "The existence of slavery at the South constitutes one of the strongest reasons, though an incidental one, which make me hope you will come. Not because it is not unpleasant in some respects, but because I believe the time is coming when something can be done for the negroes—provided men of the proper stamp are on the ground to co-operate. An effectual door is opening to preach the Gospel to them; and if there are proper men here to lead public opinion, to watch its favourable changes, and to take prudent advantage of the opportunities which may offer, I have no doubt that, in the providence of God, a really mighty effort may soon be made for this benighted, unevangelized race. Aside from this, slavery is no true objection. How much would it have weighed upon the mind of Paul?"

I quote this paragraph for the purpose of adding that these were not, with him, the words of that cheap philanthropy which says, but does not. He exemplified his own teachings. On quitting the Seminary, he accepted an invitation from a distinguished Virginia planter, General Cocke, to live in his family and labour among his "people." This excellent and venerable man, whom a benign Providence has spared to a good old age, in a letter of condolence written just a month ago, refers in touching terms to what he describes as "the loss of one of the most delightful Christian, and nearest personal, friendships of his long life, which commenced," he adds, "with the beginning of his (Dr. V. R.'s) ministry in Virginia, when he entered upon the noble enterprise

of giving religious instruction to the slave population of the South. Of this," he says, "I have a monument to his name and enterprise upon my own estate, in a chapel, the site of which was selected by himself, and consecrated by his prayer upon the spot, with the Rev. S. B. S. Bissell and myself only with him (making the small number which secured the promise), just a quarter of a century ago. If this chapel was not the first, it was certainly among the first, erected in Virginia for the avowed purpose of being devoted to the religious instruction of the coloured population. Since then, these chapels may be counted by scores, within the circle of my own knowledge, upon the estates of the large landed proprietors of the commonwealth, and they are rapidly multiplying throughout the Southern States. Thus the bread which our departed loved one cast upon the waters, is returning after many days."

Such was the theatre he selected for the exercise of his ministry. A young man whose ancestral record supplied a better patent of nobility than that which pertains to very many of the aristocratic lines of England or the Continent, liberally educated, graced with the culture of two learned professions, and invited to various advantageous positions in the Church, he declines every other proposal, to become a missionary of the cross to the servants on a Southern plantation. If "the mind which was in Christ Jesus" be not here, where shall we look for it? And if the religion which yields fruit like this be not of God, by what arguments shall a Divine faith attest its celestial origin?

It was in dealing with these untutored Africans, our brother found himself so encumbered with an impracticable theology, that he gladly repudiated it in favour of his hereditary faith. Even this, however, he was allowed to preach to them only for a limited time. It happened to be the period which marked the first decisive outburst of that spirit of fanaticism which, taking to itself seven other spirits as wicked as itself, has ever since wrought evil, and only evil, in the land, and that continually. In the fall of 1835, he felt himself obliged to abandon a field which had seemed to his eye to be "white to the harvest." His letter to the West Hanover Presbytery, by which he had been ordained, asking for his dismission, is a noble and affecting document, which it is impossible to read, even at this distance of time, without deep emo-

tion. It is too long to be quoted here. I copy a few sentences, from which you may judge of the tone that pervades it. "I consider my usefulness in my particular vocation at the South, to be almost entirely at an end. The Lord sent me amongst you, a stranger, to labour among the bondmen of the land of Virginia. I commenced the work in fear and trembling; and yet, not without hope that the prejudices which exist between your land and ours, would after a time at least cease to interrupt the plans and operations of Christianity. That hope was beginning to be realized;—*the times have changed*—and my hope is gone! A great excitement has sprung up. Prejudices, before violent, have received fresh and mighty impulses. Obstacles, scarcely visible a short time since, have now become mountains by the volcanic agitations of a rash and fiery fanaticism. Brethren! joyfully would I have laboured amongst you; and gladly would I return, if my presence would be for good."

It was one of the earliest of those bitter fruits which have been dropping from this Upas ever since. In sadness he turned his face from his beloved Africans; but he never turned his heart from them. He continued to the last to plead their cause on all fitting occasions. His pen and his purse were ever at their disposal. Like that patriarchal man, Dr. Archibald Alexander, he had an abiding faith in the ultimate amelioration of the race, and, like him, he devoted to the profound problems involved in the destiny of this mysterious people, some of the most elaborate and powerful essays which he ever wrote. It was quite in keeping with these facts, that at the late obsequies in Burlington, they should have pressed, those grateful children of Ham, with modest importunity into the doors of the sanctuary, and then gathered in mute sorrow at the railroad station, to take a last look at the coffin of their friend. There was one, indeed, who did not pause even there. Among the few mourners who attended those honoured remains to Albany, was that faithful servant, venerable alike in age and in character, who had been for more than twenty years the Eliezer of this household. He had served him with exemplary integrity. He had, on different occasions, been summoned to his bedside in sickness, to commend him to the grace and sympathy of their common Saviour—a blessed type of that nobler worship in which master and servant shall join before the throne—and it was meet that

he should wait on him to his last earthly resting-place, and for his own sake and for Africa's, drop a parting tear upon his grave.

A man like our departed brother could not be idle. In 1837 he established, as was just intimated, a Presbyterian church in Burlington, N. J., and was installed as its pastor. He retained his pastorate for three years only (June 29th, 1837–May 13th, 1840); but his interest in the church never declined. Living and dying he testified his attachment to it; and his memory is cherished there with affectionate gratitude. The two or three ensuing years were spent chiefly in the city of Washington, where he supplied the pulpit of a feeble church. In 1843 he was invited by the Board of Directors of the Theological Seminary at Princeton, to undertake an agency for augmenting the endowment of that Institution. The object was one which commended itself to his best sympathies. That ancient school of the prophets had no firmer friend; and he prosecuted the work confided to him with an energy which was crowned with merited success. It consumed a great deal of time, and required him to take toilsome journeys through distant parts of the Union, at a period when the facilities for travelling were far from being what they are now. But his heart was in the work, and he welcomed its sacrifices. His character and position gave additional force to his appeals. And when he resigned his commission into the hands of the Board, and laid upon their table a fund of one hundred thousand dollars—refusing all compensation for his services, and even declining to accept his travelling expenses—he *might*, with literal accuracy, have closed his diary for that day with the record, "And they glorified God in me." The only thing to be regretted now, is, that the work he performed was not afterward resumed by some kindred hand, and carried forward to a point which should have relieved our venerable Seminary of all financial embarrassment. The sum originally fixed upon for the endowment of its professorships was sufficient for those days: but it is very inadequate now. To remedy this evil, and provide an income which shall protect from harassing pecuniary cares the learned and able men we have placed there to educate our rising ministry, is an object well deserving the attention of the wealthy and liberal in our communion.

It was while engaged in this agency, that Dr. Van Rensselaer was called to undertake the great work of his life, and that for

which all his previous labours had been an essential part of his training. There lie before me, as I write this page, three letters: (1.) My own, under date of February 12th, 1846, announcing to him his election that day by a unanimous vote of the Board of Education of our Church, to the office of Corresponding Secretary. (2.) One of 5th March, 1846, from Dr. James W. Alexander, then in the Duane Street Church, New York, expressing his warm satisfaction at the appointment, and urging him to accept it. This letter begins: "I have said to several persons what I now say to you, that if you accept the recent appointment by the Board of Education, you will give another signal testimony of your disposition to devote yourself, in a very disinterested manner, to the good of the Church." (3.) A long and admirable letter, 24th March, 1846, from Dr. Hope, his immediate predecessor in the Secretaryship. It is an affecting thought to me, that of the four parties concerned in these letters, three are gone. How comforting the reflection, that the Church derives her life and growth from One who never dies! And how solemn the admonition, "Work while the day lasts!"

In the letter just referred to, Prof. Hope observes: "It is my deliberate and firm belief, that the Board never stood on firmer ground, or enjoyed such prospects of extensive and important results, as it does now. . . . . As yet, it is true, our Church, in all matters of benevolence, 'sees men as trees, walking.' Her spiritual views are sadly dark. Still, however, it is the dimness of the dawn, not of the departing day. It is destined to shine more and more unto the perfect day."

These were the prophetic words of a very able and far-seeing man. They are still in process of fulfilment. In so far as the Board of Education is concerned, they have been signally verified under the administration of our lamented brother. It was not without the deepest distrust of his capacity for the work, that he accepted the post; but there is no one in our Church to question, that he was "called of God" to engage in this service. Any formal review of his administration would be out of place here: it will not be attempted. Let it suffice to say, in justice both to the living and the dead, that under the wise and efficient management of his predecessors, the Board had entered upon a career of new and enlarged usefulness, and the Church was waking up to its im-

portance as an indispensable agency in carrying forward its plans. Catching the true spirit of the institution, he threw himself at once into the work, and employed his noble powers in fostering and extending it, until death arrested his labours. That he did more than any other man during the last fourteen years, to imbue our Church with Scriptural views of education, to establish academies and colleges upon a sound basis, to direct the attention of pious youth to the Christian ministry, and to elevate this whole subject to something of its true position in the affections of the Church, will be conceded on every side without argument.

In accomplishing these objects, he had the invaluable aid of wise and vigilant colleagues, especially of one whose unwearied and efficient devotion to our educational interests for many years, has won for him the lasting gratitude of the Church. In discharging the functions of his great stewardship, our brother spared neither time, nor labour, nor money. He wrote and published numerous essays and addresses in vindication of what he held to be the true theory of Christian training. With equal tact and ability he controverted false principles which had been tacitly incorporated in popular schemes of education. He expounded the true relations between the Church and her children; and while illustrating their mutual rights and privileges, enforced with cogent argument their reciprocal duties. He did much to rebuke those derogatory views of the sacred office which, to their shame be it spoken, are entertained by many parents who presume to come to the Lord's table. He took many a deserving youth by the hand, and from his own purse, or through the kindness of friends, supplied him with the means of procuring an education. By his preaching and his pen, he did at least as much as any other individual, to raise the standard of liberality in the Church, and increase the annual contributions to all good objects. But why continue these specifications? No inventory can do justice to the subject. What part of the Church has he not visited on some errand of mercy? What good cause has he not helped? What great interest of the common Christianity has not felt the genial grasp of his hand? What stream of bounty, flowing through our land, is not the broader or the deeper because his feet have pressed its margin?

These are not the exaggerations of a partial friendship. Our

whole Church has, by the solemn and deliberate action of her General Assembly, virtually said the same things; and her testimony has met a hearty response from multitudes who belong to other branches of the household of faith.—But it is time to look a little more closely at some of the personal qualities of our friend. We need not go far in order to discover the secret of that great influence which he confessedly wielded in the Church. I shall touch only upon two or three points of his character.

The statements already made imply that he possessed superior intellectual endowments. If his pre-eminent goodness has been permitted to overshadow this part of his character, there is the more reason why it should be mentioned in this connection. No one would claim for him those brilliant gifts which dazzle, as they too often mislead, the multitude. But neither can it be denied that he had an acute and vigorous intellect, quick in apprehending truth, apt in its discriminations, and capable of a large generalization. It fell in his way to deal with a variety of questions, speculative and practical, some of which had baffled men of acknowledged strength and perspicacity; and no one can follow him through these discussions, without feeling that he is in the presence of a sound thinker and able logician. His ordinary sermons were far from being commonplace appeals or disquisitions. Suffering, as they undoubtedly did, from a certain intangible timidity in his delivery, there was always something about them, in plan and sentiment, which to a candid hearer betokened true mental power. Nor is it to be overlooked that some of his ablest sermons and addresses were written in pencil, in railroad cars and steamboat cabins—proof, at once, of great intellectual vigour and of a rare capacity of abstraction. Denied by the exigencies of his official station, the opportunity of quiet and systematic study, it is marvellous how many books he read, upon what an endless variety of subjects he formed and published opinions, and how successfully he carried forward, year by year, his own mental culture. We cannot err in assigning him a high rank in the scale of intellect.

Dr. Hodge, in his funeral sermon, has dwelt especially upon his *goodness* and his *faithfulness*, as a sort of epitome of his Christian character: "Well done, *good* and *faithful* servant!" Never was this passage more aptly applied—not even to Bunyan's "*Faith-*

ful," who sealed his fidelity with his blood. Faithfulness to his Master, and to his own convictions of duty, was his great characteristic virtue. The only question with him was, "What is duty?" And he was ready to follow it through fire and through water. Difficulties were nothing; self-denial was nothing; even the remonstrances of friends were nothing, when he heard, or when he believed he heard, the call of duty. Possibly (on this latter point) his inflexible determination to follow the right, may sometimes have caught an unconscious tinge from a trait of similar aspect but less unearthly temper. There were occasions, rare, it is true, when a will slightly less rigorous, might, peradventure, have seen the path of duty through the eyes of its friends, and leading in a different direction from the one that had been chosen. But it was impossible to distrust the integrity of motive and thorough conscientiousness of your friend, even where you felt that his decision of character, itself controlled by the noble generosity of his nature, had stolen the livery of duty, and so misled him. *Fidelity to God and to his own conscience* was the master principle of his life.

With this trait was combined another, which every one who knew him associates with his name,—*Humility*. The soil might not, to a worldly eye, seem very favourable to this modest plant. Here was birth, wealth, the highest social position, fine intellectual gifts, eminent official station in the Church, and universal respect and esteem among his brethren—food enough, one might suppose, for pride; but he was only too happy to gather up these choice earthly blessings and lay them at his Saviour's feet. He could not but be grateful for such mercies; but he seemed never to think of himself except as a sinner saved by grace. His habitual feeling was, "I am not worthy." "I am less than the least of all saints." "Not I, but the grace of God which was with me."* With a lowly estimate of his own gifts and services, he seemed surprised at any special recognition of them by others. Only three weeks before his death, he said to me: "When I was elected Moderator of the Assembly [at Lexington, Ky., in 1857], I trem-

* There is certainly a pride of ancestry which is just and rational, and which the Scriptures sanction. I have no doubt that my friend cherished it. But I do not deem it out of place to say here, that in a thirty years' intimacy with him, I never knew him to allude to his own social "position," nor to utter a disparaging word about the birth and family of any one else.

bled. I was doubtful whether God designed to lift me up, in order that my fall might be the more conspicuous, or whether it was meant as a token of his approval of my unworthy labours." It is the immutable law of Christ's kingdom, that this spirit shall be honoured. He himself honours it. "He giveth grace to the humble." "I *dwell* . . . . with him that is of an humble and contrite spirit." Not only so, but he causes it to be honoured by others. There is a law written upon the heart, which compels us to do homage to this celestial grace—the lowliest and the sweetest flower in the Lord's garden. Mr. Jay has said, "It is not in our power to love, for our loving another depends upon him; but it is in our power to be loved." And, certainly, there is a wonderful power in humility. It disarms prejudice. It enkindles sympathy. It inspires confidence. The oftener it says "I am not worthy," the more vehemently we cry, "You *are* worthy." And thus it wins upon us, and leads us captive before we know it.

In Dr. Van Rensselaer's case this truly Christian grace shone with the greater radiance, because it embellished a character of such remarkable strength. It was not so much a violet in the grass, as a mantle of moss upon a rock. He was a man among men—athletic in mind and muscle—a man of action—a captain in the sacramental hosts—vigilant and intrepid—a stranger to fear—not courting conflict, but never shunning it—and capable, in a good cause always, of dealing heavy blows: and yet the feeling which pervaded his life was,—

> "My prayers and alms, imperfect and defiled,
> Are but the feeble efforts of a child:
> Cleansed in thine own all-purifying blood,
> Forgive their evil and accept their good:
> I cast them at thy feet—my only plea
> Is what it was—dependence upon Thee."

His humility was rewarded here: with what joy must it have hastened, as it passed the heavenly portals, to cast its crown, as it had already cast its toils and trials, its earthly achievements and honours, at the Saviour's feet!

We have had some glimpses of the laborious life which our brother led. I recur to the point, only to repeat what has been so often said, that he toiled *too much*. The Church is just now

mourning the early death of one of the ablest and best educated men she ever sent into the mission field. Burning with love to his Master, he repelled the urgent appeals of his brethren, who remonstrated with him against the peril of attempting to do the work of four or five years in two; and his precious life became the forfeit—not, however, without his sadly confessing, a few hours before his death, that he had sinned in overtasking his powers. We have no right to use language as strong as this respecting Dr. Van Rensselaer: but in the judgment of all his friends, this was the capital error of his life. He was an incessant worker. He denied himself the relaxation which every literary and professional man requires as the indispensable condition of health. Nature is jealous of her rights. If they are invaded, she may wink at it for a time, but it is only to make the retribution more terrible in the end. We feel the humiliation involved in this dependence of mind upon matter, of the spiritual upon the animal nature: and we sometimes fight against it with a feeling approaching to resentment. But the principle is incorporated with the economy under which we are living. It came in with sin, and it will only go out with sin. As long as we are in this probationary state, we must have the lesson of abasement constantly rung in our ears, that the deathless mind is a *prisoner* in its clay tabernacle—a servant to the very house in which it dwells. We must wait for the resurrection-body, before we can escape from this bondage. Like too many others, our beloved brother contemned this law. His ardour in the Master's cause blinded him to the imperative demands of his own physical nature. His robust constitution resisted the aggression long, but at length it developed the germs of that insidious malady which carried him to the grave. We honour the motives which prompted to this fatal sacrifice; but we must deplore the error which brought so beneficent a career to what, with no irreverent meaning, we feel to have been a premature close.

There were other prominent traits of his character—to name, by way of example, his cheerful and munificent liberality—which well deserve to be mentioned here. But the length of this discourse forbids me to enlarge.

Of his domestic and social life I shall not trust myself to speak, except in a word or two. His freedom from all pretension, his simplicity, his unaffected kindness, his genial sympathy with all

things bright and true and good, his abounding humour—who that was in the habit of meeting him, can be a stranger to these traits? It has been aptly said, that every truly great man has something of the boy in his heart. No one ever thought the less of Edmund Burke, on hearing that a friend who entered his house unexpectedly one day, found him flat upon his back on the floor, frolicking with a troop of children. CORTLANDT VAN RENSSELAER was never more at home than when gambolling with children, or interchanging pleasant talk and repartee with a group of young persons. His feelings never lost their early freshness. The *boy* was there still in all his mirth. And for humour—rarely does a sedate visage conceal so much of it. I scarcely ever received a letter, or even a hurried pencil-note from him, that had not some sparkle in it. How could you help loving such a man?

What, then, must have been the HOME which embosomed this noble, blessed presence? I may not invade the sanctity of that spot. But they only knew him, who knew him there. How radiant that scene with the light and life of earth's holiest affections! What grace and dignity, what culture and intelligence, what mutual counsel and confidence, what refinement, what sympathy, what oneness, what innocent hilarity, what grateful studies, what pleasant converse concerning the things of the kingdom, what hallowed fellowship around the household altar, what generous hospitality, what nameless tokens and presages of the better country! Alas, that such a home and such hearts should be made desolate. But He who has smitten them, will bind up their wounds. *His* presence will not depart from them. "A Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation."

It was a saying of McCheyne's, "Live so as to be missed." We know but too well what this means. Widely and sadly is he missed. While we condole with the mourners, we feel that their loss is our loss. Our whole Church mourns with them. She is becoming used to tears. God is taking from us the men who, with great diversity in their gifts, were, each of them, pre-eminent in his own sphere. It behooves us to humble ourselves under his rebukes, and lay to heart the lessons he is teaching us. These lessons are too obvious to require to be stated here. A single one conveyed by this last bereavement, may be suggested.

Our Boards are the arms of the Church. The history we have been reviewing, shows what efficient implements they may become, as well for developing the resources of the Church, as for carrying forward its work. The Board of Education cannot revert to its former position. Dr. Van Rensselaer's administration has made it a different institution from what it ever was before. And it is now one of our prime duties, to see that it be preserved and perpetuated in all the amplitude of its plans, and all the energy of its operations. These agencies are too vast, too complex, and too vital to the progress of Christianity, to be intrusted to feeble or unskilful hands. May it please God to raise up men qualified for this work—"men that have understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." He alone can heal our breaches, and sanctify our losses.

Let us return for a moment to that beautiful Home on the banks of the Delaware. I will not retrace with you the events of the nine months which preceded the 25th day of July. Let it suffice, that through all the fluctuations of that inexorable malady, as well during his brief Southern tour as while at home, our dear brother was "kept in perfect peace." I have seen death in various forms. I have watched the progress of many a sufferer from the first stages of a mortal disease to its close. But his is the only instance I can recall, in which an illness prolonged through so many months, was attended with *uninterrupted* peace of mind. Almost all Christians have, in these circumstances, occasional seasons of darkness and depression. His sky was without a cloud. I do not mean that he had from the first an absolute assurance of his union with Christ. But he had such a hope in his Redeemer as never to have been left "comfortless." And this hope became stronger and brighter as he drew nearer his haven.

In the interviews already mentioned, I spoke to him of God's great goodness in preserving him from doubts and fears; and said, "You *do* feel assured of your pardon and acceptance, do you not?" "Yes," he replied with deep emotion, "blessed be God, I do. In the early part of my sickness, I was in the habit of saying, 'I *hope* I have an interest in Christ.' But I find I must give that up, and say, 'I *know* whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.'" And thus it continued to the close. There

was no rapture, but perfect serenity and composure. Soothed by the assiduities of true affection—and there is no spot on earth where affection blooms with such beauty and fragrance as in a Christian home—he calmly awaited his summons to the skies. The few friends whom his failing strength allowed him to see, went away praising God for the grace which so irradiated that couch of sickness. We knew that there was everything to make life desirable to him. He was just at the zenith of his powers. With his large accumulations of knowledge, his ripe experience, and his rare facility of labour, he seemed better qualified for his great work than ever. It was a work that suited him. He had the esteem and confidence of the whole Church, and the comprehensive policy inaugurated by himself and his no less active and faithful colleague, was beginning to yield its fruits. Besides this, he had objects of a different kind to live for, which took hold upon the very depths of his nature,—for what a group was that around his bed! And yet, he could leave all without a struggle. So complete was the triumph of grace over nature, that he talked of death as familiarly as he would of a summer's journey. His eyes were upon the heavenly city and the Lamb who is the light thereof. And though he might not, in his humility, appropriate the language, it was impossible to see him without thinking of that sublime challenge of the Apostle, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing." And thus Cortlandt Van Rensselaer passed to his crown.

"Go to the grave in all thy glorious prime,
In full activity of zeal and power:
A Christian cannot die before his time,
The Lord's appointment is the servant's hour.

"Go to the grave; at noon from labour cease;
Rest on thy sheaves, thy harvest-task is done;
Come from the heart of battle, and in peace,
Soldier, go home; with thee the fight is won.

"Go to the grave; though like a fallen tree,
At once with verdure, flowers, and fruitage crowned,
Thy form may perish, and thine honours be
Lost in the mouldering bosom of the ground.

"Go to the grave, which, faithful to its trust,
The germ of immortality shall keep;
While safe, as watched by cherubim, thy dust
Shall, till the judgment-day, in JESUS sleep.

"Go to the grave; for there thy Saviour lay
In Death's embraces ere he rose on high;
And all the ransomed, by that narrow way,
Pass to eternal life beyond the sky.

"Go to the grave;—no, take thy seat above;
Be thy pure spirit present with the Lord,
Where thou, for faith and hope, hast perfect love,
And open vision for the written word."

The following is the latter part of a Discourse, delivered by the Rev. W. B. Sprague, D.D., in the Second Presbyterian Church in Albany, on the 16th of September, and already printed by request of the family. The text is Luke 14: 2,—"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

I can scarcely think of a more striking illustration of my subject than is furnished by the character, and life, and I may add death, of the lamented Dr. Cortlandt Van Rensselaer, whose remains some of us saw laid, a few weeks since, in their last lowly and beautiful resting-place. It is no part of my intention to go into any of the details of his history, or even, at this late day, to attempt any general delineation of his character. I wish to present him before you in only a single aspect, that you may learn from him the one great lesson—so beautifully embodied in his life—that "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Dr. Van Rensselaer, as you all know, was honoured in his descent; not to go back beyond the first generation—his father was a very patriarch in simplicity and dignity—a man of the noblest natural qualities, of the finest accomplishments, of elevated civil position, of the highest social consideration, and not only shedding a genial lustre on every relation he sustained, but forming one of the chief attractions of the community in which he lived. Cortlandt passed his boyhood and early youth amidst the luxuries and elegances incident to the paternal home; and, as soon as he is capable of understanding it, he is met with that revelation that embosoms death to so many young men—that he is destined to be the heir to a princely fortune—a fortune that will make him as independent as he *can* be in this world, and leaving it at his option whether to use his faculties and become a man, or settle down into the indolent and sensual enjoyment of himself. In due time he is sent to college, where, with all the truly benign and elevating influences that prevail, there are innumerable tempters to that which is evil;—altars on which young men offer them-

selves as voluntary sacrifices to the Prince of darkness. But he passes this ordeal unscathed: the influences of a pious education prove too strong for the mighty and manifold corrupt influences by which he is assailed; though it was not till after he left college that he believed that his heart was touched by the renovating influence from above. In due time, the great problem urges itself upon his thoughts,—which of the different paths that open before him into life he shall take. That he will not take that of the sensualist, or of the prodigal, we feel assured; for his experience at college, and still more his subsequent profession of faith in Christ, is a sufficient guarantee against that;—but will he not feel that the circumstances in which Providence has placed him fairly allow him the latitude of a somewhat easy life? Will he not so far heed the pleadings of natural feeling, as to settle down in some dignified position that shall impose no heavy tax upon his faculties, and consider his mission fulfilled in exerting a general good influence, and especially in contributing of his abundance to the promotion of the best interests of his fellow-men? Had he taken this course, would any one have felt that it involved any particular incongruity with his character or his profession; or would there have been anything in it to forfeit the respect of either the Church or the world? But no, he has received an impulse in a different direction—he forgets his ease, and his pleasure, and all the world's attractions, in his aspirations for the ministry of the Gospel; and in due time he is engaged in his preparation for the sacred office; and, at a later period still, is coming forth as one of Heaven's commissioned ambassadors. And now, considering his excellent descent, and excellent talents, and excellent education, perhaps it would be only imputing to him the ordinary measure of human ambition, to expect that he should wait a little for some one of the higher fields of ministerial usefulness;—some place which would at once require but a moderate share of effort, and be congenial with his cultivated tastes. But, instead of thus taking counsel of flesh and blood, we hear of him a voluntary, humble missionary down among the negroes of Virginia; and he goes round into their huts and hovels, talking to them with the affectionate freedom of a brother, and labouring heartily and lovingly to make them free men in Christ. He stayed there, sowing seed on that interesting, but in some respects dark and rugged field, till the excitement on

the subject of slavery led him to abandon it; but I should infer from what I have heard him say, that he not only never forgot his coloured friends, but that he remembered his labours among them with as much interest as any which he ever performed. When his mission among the slaves closed, he came a little more than half way home, and took charge of a church, consisting then of a mere handful of people, who found in him, in every respect, just the minister they needed, and to whose other excellent qualifications was superadded that rare one—of being able to preach for nothing. He remained there several years, until a sphere of not less self-denying activity, but of more extended usefulness, opened to him, as Secretary of the General Assembly's Board of Education; and it is not too much to say that here, in a course of gratuitous, persevering labour, he wore his strength and life away in the service of the Church. The day-labourer does not work harder to earn bread for his family, the miser does not work harder to add to the heap that *must* grow even within hearing of the groans of starvation, than Cortlandt Van Rensselaer worked to enlarge, and direct, and apply the resources of the Church, in aid of the cause of theological education.

Am I not right in saying that in all this our departed friend—when we take into view the circumstances in which Providence had placed him—set a beautiful example of Christian humility? Another glance at his history will show us how this humble man was exalted—or I should rather say *is* exalted; for his noblest exaltation is amidst the scenes in which he is mingling now. His exaltation began in the substantial excellence which his humble and self-denying labours imparted to his own character: it made him a man of mark, a man towards whom the eyes both of the Church and of the world were turned, not only with respect but with admiration. He was exalted in the regards of the various classes and communities which have successively enjoyed the benefit of his labours. The good people of Virginia, among whom he sojourned as an humble missionary on their plantations, honoured him for his benevolence, fidelity, and condescension; and the poor enslaved people, whose minds, darker than their faces, he sought to enlighten with Divine truth—they honoured him as a benefactor indeed; and among them no doubt he found some of the early seals of his ministry, who have carried, or will carry, the grateful

remembrance of him up to Heaven. He was honoured by the feeble congregation who, for several years, enjoyed his pastoral labours, and who sustained towards him the relation of a grateful beneficiary. He was honoured by that influential and venerable Board with which, for so long a period, he was more immediately connected: by the different Theological Seminaries, of which he was a most kind and watchful guardian; by his brethren in the ministry all over the land, who recognized him as a fellow-helper in every good work: by the highest judicatory of the Church, in appointing him their Moderator; and finally by the Church as a body—not merely the Presbyterian, but other denominations among whom he lived, or to whom his character was known. And the men of the world honoured him too; for, however little they might sympathize in the objects towards which his efforts were directed, they could not but admire the unswerving integrity, the heroic self-denial, the calm and earnest perseverance, which were so conspicuous in his every-day life. And need I add that he was honoured, both of God and of man, as the time of his departure drew near. A complicated malady, firmly seated in his system, is the acknowledged signal of approaching death. He knows what is before him, but all other desires are subordinate to that one desire,—that God's holy will should be done. He looks around upon one of the brightest, loveliest domestic circles, and then thinks of his own grave, and still keeps as cheerful as ever; because he remembers that his grave will form part of his Redeemer's gracious dominion, and thinks what a gathering-place Heaven will be for the loved and the loving on earth. His two devoted sons take him in their arms and row him about on the river, where he can breathe the fresh air and gratify one of his peculiar tastes; and, while he thankfully accepts these offices of filial love, his own heart is lifted to his Heavenly Father in filial gratitude and praise. His brethren in the ministry and other friends come to see him, and he talks to them like a consciously dying man, who has already got within sight of the Heavenly Jerusalem; and they go away, at once bowed and refreshed under his tender and solemn words. Finally, the morning comes that he is to die. Conscious, evidently, of the nearness of the change, he makes a last request, which shows his thoughtfulness, even in death, for those he is leaving, and now feels that he is ready. The ominous sleep comes

over him, out of which he is to be awaked by the songs of angels; and, while the words of prayer for the dying are being uttered by the voice of conjugal love, the cord that has hitherto bound the mortal and immortal together, snaps asunder, and the eye and the heart that have been fastened upon Heaven so long, are entranced with its full glory. And, as the tidings flew in the lightning, there was hearty mourning all over the Church; and that was literally a mourning assembly that gathered around his coffin, when the day of the funeral came; and those of us who met his mortal remains on the spot where he began life, were mourners too, though we felt how much the gloom of the hour was qualified and softened by the remembrance of what he had been, and the thought of what he had become. Thus was he honoured both in life and in death; but most of all is he honoured in the crown that he wears now; in the new and noble song that trembles upon his lips; in a blissful companionship, never to end, with angels who have always kept themselves pure, and with saints who, like himself, have been made pure by being washed in the blood of Calvary. Will any one now doubt whether he who performed that course of humble, self-denying service for Christ, has found the promise made good to him, that "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted?" Nay, is not the exaltation which he has attained such, that no sacrifice, no self-denial, which it is possible for mortals to be subjected to, could be brought into comparison with it?

Oh that I could write, so that it should be proof against time, upon the hearts especially of those to whom Providence has dispensed its bounties with a most liberal hand, the great practical lesson which our subject so impressively teaches, and the character we have been contemplating so beautifully illustrates,—the obligation of living so as to fulfil the legitimate ends of human existence. Every young man especially, who is placed in these favoured, yet dangerous circumstances, I would call upon to pause, and decide intelligently and deliberately, whether he will take the path of humility and self-denial, and obedience to the dictates of an enlightened conscience, that leads to usefulness and honour on earth, and finally terminates in Heaven; or the path of indolent ease, of sensuality, of sinful indulgence, that no one can walk in without being dishonoured on this side of the grave, and ruined eternally on the other. Yonder is a youth to whom the fact of his

being born to a large inheritance has operated first as a paralysis upon his energies, and then as a poison through his whole moral system. "What need have I to exert myself?" is the question which he opposes to every solicitation to active effort; and thus he quickly becomes a confirmed idler; and in the track of idleness comes multiform, loathsome vice: and now there is going rapidly forward the suicidal process, which, in its issue, gathers a company of friends, with bleeding hearts, around a drunkard's grave. Or the case may not be so bad as this, and yet bad enough to keep any prudent person from running the least hazard of becoming an example of it. There may be no open outrage upon the laws of God—there may be nothing to make reverence shudder or decency blush—nothing more than an ignoble selfishness acting itself out in ways which the world calls honourable; but there is no practical recognition of the obligation to do good: the graceful amenities of life may not be overlooked, but the claims of substantial charity are to a great extent ignored—there may be exhibited a luxury and a splendour, and a loftiness of social position, in which the opulent and the gay will love to regale themselves; but there will be no attractions there for the ignorant, or the needy, or the wretched, or even for those who come together to consult for their relief or well-being. If that man does anybody any good, it is only an incidental result from his efforts at self-gratification; and not because he is capable of forming a disinterested purpose. When he reaches the end of his course, and looks backward, not a solitary monument of designed active usefulness rises up to relieve the gloomy waste of an utterly selfish life. His wealth may indeed secure to him a splendid funeral pageant, and may build a costly monument over his grave, and inscribe upon it words of more than doubtful import; but, believe me, there is an inherent tendency to oblivion in that man's name which the wealth of the Indies could not counteract. Even those who flattered and caressed him while living, have little to say of him after he is dead; and perhaps, in that little, there may be scathing truth at the expense even of gratitude and consistency. And he goes to meet his Lord as a servant who has wasted his Lord's goods; as one who had ten talents intrusted to him, but who has nothing to show for any of them. Compare even this less offensive form of self-indulgent character with such a character as that of our departed friend, and

say whether darkness and light are more opposite. When an allusion is made to the one, mark the significant silence; when the name of the other is spoken—no matter in what circle—how spontaneous are the testimonials to his exalted worth! Curiosity is attracted to the grave of the one by the splendid chiselled marble that towers above it; reverence and gratitude walk hand in hand to the grave of the other, and place upon it their choicest offerings. I look upward, I look downward; and behold! where there was abasement there is exaltation; where there was exaltation there is abasement! I gaze upon that saint who has come up out of one of the world's dark places into the boundless light and glory amidst which the throne of the Lamb is fixed; I gaze upon that sinner who has been cast down from one of the world's high places into the depths of degradation and woe; and a thrill of rapture or a chill of horror comes over me, as I hold to my mind the thought that the career of the one or of the other is to be eternal!

EXTRACTS FROM THE NEWSPAPER PRESS.

New York Commercial Advertiser, July 27th, 1860.

The death of the Rev. Cortlandt Van Rensselaer, D.D., who departed this life at his residence, in Burlington, New Jersey, on the morning of the 25th inst., will be deplored as a great loss by the Christian Church and the community generally. The event was not unforeseen. The insidious disease which had been rapidly wasting his robust and powerful frame for the last six months, gave but too distinct notice during the past spring that the citadel of life was nearly reached, and that no permanent reparation could be expected. He, himself, "set his house in order," like a man who knew that his departure was at hand, and who, in the beautiful words of Bishop Jewell, "had not so lived that he was afraid to die." The event has even come later than was expected by his friends, and, probably, by himself. But such a stroke, however anticipated, cannot fall at last without inflicting a profound sense of loss and calamity.

A year or two ago, who more likely to have twenty-five years more of life and labour than Dr. Van Rensselaer? His frame seemed to be cast in a Herculean mould. Everything about him, figure, complexion, movement, all seemed to indicate great strength and endurance. His habits were all favourable to long life. He was cheerful, social, genial. He had a great object before him, and he was working for it with that hearty earnestness which is alike favourable to mental vigour and bodily health. But he is gone—in the prime of his years and the midst of his usefulness. Scarcely had he reached his fifty-second year, when he was summoned away from the work he loved so well on earth, to the Saviour, whom he loved better, in heaven.

Dr. Van Rensselaer was descended from a family which has been associated with the history of this country almost from its first settlement by Europeans, and whose great possessions, transmitted through a long succession of generations, form an exceptional and almost unique case in our American society.

In the year 1630, a company of Patroons was formed at Amsterdam, under a grant of their "High Mightinesses the Lords States of Holland and the Council of Nineteen of the West India Company, to colonize the recently discovered New Netherlands." The company consisted of the following members: Samuel Godyer, Gilliame Van Rensselaer, Bloemart, Jan de Laet, and David Pietersz de Vries. The following members were afterwards added: Mathys Van Ceulen, Nicolaes Van Sittorigh, Harinck Koeck, and Heyndrich Hamel. Scarcely a name of this long list survives, we believe, but that of Van Rensselaer. The first intention was to settle a colony on South River, at Cape Henlopen. Thus much we know from a curious old Dutch document, which the liberality of James Lenox, Esq., has caused to be translated and printed. A long historical hiatus follows. But the Van Rensselaers ultimately obtained an extensive grant of land on both shores of the Hudson River, at Albany, where the old family residence is still seen at the northern extremity of the city.

Cortlandt Van Rensselaer was the fifth son of the late Hon. Stephen Van Rensselaer, who was for some time a member of Congress, and who presented a high example of the Christian virtues in all the relations of life. His second wife, the mother of Cortlandt, was the daughter of Governor Paterson, of New Jersey, a lady of extraordinary beauty and accomplishments. Cortlandt received his collegiate education at Yale, and his theological at Princeton. After he had entered the ministry, he spent a year or two at the South, directing his labours principally to the benefit of the negroes. He resided a large part of that time with the accomplished and excellent Gen. Carrington,* of Halifax County, Virginia. On his return to the North, he became pastor of the Presbyterian Church, in Burlington, New Jersey. It was then an infant enterprise. It originated with himself; and he not only

* Whilst it is true that my father frequently visited the plantation of General Carrington, here mentioned, his *residence*, when in Virginia, was with Mrs. S. C. Carrington, at Mildendo, Halifax Co., Va.—C. V. R.

laboured without compensation in its service, but contributed generously and largely to its material expenses. After fulfilling the duties of a pastor for several years, he entered a wider and more laborious field, the office of Secretary and General Agent of the Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church. To this work he earnestly consecrated himself. It was evidently the work of his heart and of his life. The usefulness of the Board was greatly extended under his management, and hundreds of young men have entered the ministry, and are now on their way to it, through his indefatigable exertions.

Another important work of Dr. Van Rensselaer, was that of providing an ampler endowment for the Theological Seminary at Princeton. It was at that time (1837–42) in deep embarrassments in consequence of the severe commercial crisis, through which the country had recently passed, and in which a considerable part of the funds of the institution had been lost. Dr. Van Rensselaer devoted himself to the interests of his *alma mater* with the affection of a son. He began with a noble contribution himself ($2000), and canvassed the Church from its northern to its southern limits, to make up an endowment, which should hereafter relieve the Seminary from chronic embarrassment and periodical solicitation. His efforts were crowned with success. He made an era in the history of Princeton, from which it has gone forward with a continual expansion of influence and prosperity. All who love that justly renowned seat of sacred learning, have cause gratefully to cherish the name of Cortlandt Van Rensselaer.

He left a noble example to a class of young men, which the growing opulence of our country is ever multiplying—those whom wealth places above the necessity of exertion, and who, therefore, too often, feel themselves exempted from that laborious life which is the indispensable condition of usefulness. Not so with Dr. Van Rensselaer. Instead of turning sorrowfully away from Christ, "because he had great possessions," he turned to him and his sublime work of enlightening and saving men, with all the more grateful ardour, for the large bounty of his providence. Wealth was to him simply the means of a free and joyous Christian activity and beneficence. We have reason to know that, for some time at least, he consecrated more than half of his ample income to holy and charitable uses. Yet he lived like a gentleman, and we

have no doubt enjoyed his fortune all the more while turning it into the true and imperishable riches. His beautiful, though by no means ostentatious mansion, on the shore of the Delaware, is an attractive object to steamers, which are ever plying on the bosom of that noble river. He retained that lovely residence after he resigned his pastoral home at Burlington. Thither he resorted for rest and refreshment, in the intervals of his severe and manifold labours; and thence he has just taken his departure, to meet, we trust, that approving word, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

The New York "World," August 10th, 1860.

The Honoured and Useful Dead.—Christianity is a remedial system. Its object is to recover men from sin, degradation, and ruin. It begins in the heart of every one who truly embraces it, a work of preparation for a glorious eternity. And whilst it does this it renders the believer useful to his fellow-men. Christianity is a religion of love, from beginning to end. The plan of salvation originated in love, was accomplished in love, and its effect is to produce in the hearts of all who embrace it, love to God and love to man. It is the true well-spring of *benevolence*, whose influence is manifested in *beneficence*. Nor is the influence of good men limited to their stay in this world. It lives after their death, in their cherished example, their remembered words of instruction, and in the blessings conferred in answer to their prayers.

We have been led to make these remarks by reason of the recent death of two very dear Christian friends, who were loved and honoured far beyond the limits of the Church to which they belonged. One was the Rev. Cortlandt Van Rensselaer, D.D., and the other was the Rev. Robert S. Finley.

Dr. Van Rensselaer belonged to one of the most ancient, honoured, and distinguished families of our country. His father was the late General Stephen Van Rensselaer, of Albany, a man of large landed possessions, of great personal and political influence, whom every one respected and loved who had the happiness to know him. He bore among his numerous tenants and dependents the title of "Patroon," which expressed the relation

which subsisted between him and them—a relation which, in colonial days, was more appreciated and honoured than in these days of popular equality. The mother of Dr. Van Rensselaer belonged to the Paterson family, a family of much reputation and influence in New Jersey.

Though of such an honourable lineage, and possessing ample wealth, Dr. Van Rensselaer was a man of unaffected simplicity of manners, of most genial disposition, and singularly free from pride and ostentation. In this respect, his life and conduct formed a striking contrast with those of many men whom we may daily see, whose pretensions are only equalled by their innate vanity and insignificance. His collegiate studies were prosecuted at Yale College, where he graduated in 1827. For three years he studied law, and was honourably admitted to the Bar in the State of New York in 1830. The same year, having resolved to enter the ministry of the Gospel, he became a student in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, New Jersey. He received ordination in 1835, and devoted nearly two years to preaching to the slaves in the State of Virginia, a labour of benevolence in which he took the deepest interest, and in which he had the love of the slaves and the confidence of their masters. In 1837 he became pastor of the Presbyterian church in Burlington, New Jersey, which small, ancient, and very pleasant city, continued to be the place of his residence until his work on earth was finished. In 1846 he became Corresponding Secretary of the Board of Education of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (Old School), a post which he held for fourteen years.

Dr. Van Rensselaer was a man of robust constitution, fine personal appearance, reputable talents and acquirements, and had a sound and discriminating mind. Possessing little of what is popularly called genius, he had two of the greatest of all possessions, industry and perseverance. He was not a man of erudition, and yet his acquirements were highly respectable; not an orator, and yet a most instructive preacher. Many of the sermons and discourses which he delivered on extraordinary occasions, were printed at his own expense, and widely circulated. The great end which he seemed ever to have in view was usefulness, not distinction or fame. He lived to do good. Like all men who aim to accomplish much, he was a man of great system, and of much

firmness in maintaining and carrying forward his plans; and although it cannot be said of him, nor of any other that ever lived, that he made no mistakes in the devising or the carrying out of his plans, yet no one could question the purity of his motives, or the integrity of his acts. He was one of the most useful men that the Church to which he belonged has ever possessed; and all that he did was at his own charge; for if he ever received a salary it was never spent for the benefit of himself or his family, but devoted to benevolent or religious objects. The Rev. Dr. Hodge, who knew him well, speaks of him in the sermon which he preached at the funeral in the following terms:

"In this service (the Secretaryship of the Board of Education), Dr. Van Rensselaer was indefatigable. He was one of the hardest working men in the Church. He worked incessantly, even in the railroad car, and the steamboat; sitting at the board of the directors or of the trustees, when nothing important demanded his attention, you would find him busily employed, writing letters, making extracts from books, or taking notes for future use. He gave himself far too little rest. When he assumed the conduct of the Board of Education, its operations were confined to the support of candidates for the ministry. He probably increased his labours fourfold by including the organization and support of parochial schools, presbyterial academies, and synodical colleges. Not content with all this, he laboured incessantly with his pen. He published an annual volume of addresses and discourses on the general subject of education; he originated and conducted a monthly magazine, a work in itself almost enough to fill the hands of one person. He was constantly called upon to preach or to deliver public lectures in furtherance of the great cause in which he was embarked. All this service was rendered not only gratuitously, but at a large and constant pecuniary sacrifice. This activity continued to the last. When unable to leave his house, or even his bed, or to hold his pen, he still dictated, and employed the last remnants of his life and strength in devising or recommending works of general utility."

The sickness of which Dr. Van Rensselaer died was a protracted one. For many weeks there was no hope of his recovery. This was his condition when the General Assembly met in Rochester last May. The case of one so widely known, and so greatly beloved,

naturally excited great sympathy in that body. A letter of condolence was addressed to him by the Assembly (an honour, we believe, never accorded to any other man), signed by every member, and the body included more than three hundred ministers and elders. His death was eminently peaceful, and he has gone to join the portion of the Church which is in that wonderful and glorious world so unknown as yet to us, and to which we must all so soon follow him, if we are heirs of those precious promises in which he trusted.

The Observer, New York, August 2, 1860.

When our last paper was going to press, Rev. Cortlandt Van Rensselaer, D.D., our friend and brother, was dying. So long had he been lingering, when hope had gone out in sad expectancy of his departure, that we had begun to think the shadow on his dial had gone back, and the number of his days was to be prolonged. But so it did not seem best to Him who gives such men to adorn and edify the Church, and then takes them to shine as stars in the firmament and gems in His crown of crowns. Other pens will do justice to the name and memory of this great and good man; we claim the privilege of dropping a tear on his grave, and speaking of him from long personal acquaintance.

Too much has been made and said of his being an heir of fortune, and born to a high position in the world, as if he was entitled to higher praise when he turned his back upon the ease and honours of a life of affluence and idleness, and wore himself out in self-denying labours for Christ and the Church. But he was a Christian. *That* dispels the charm of inglorious rest in the lap of luxury, and opens the way to glory in the field of sacrifice and achievement. *That* sinks the treasures of Egypt to their true place; while the service of God, with its recompense in the future, seizes the soul, and leads it on to such a life as Moses and Paul and Van Rensselaer preferred. It has never been the order of God's providence or grace to call many of the rich to the ministry of the Word; but when a rich man is called of the Spirit, he obeys as readily as the poor, and the honour of obedience is not to the called, but to Him who called him and counted him worthy.

But we must take into the account his early training, and his

associations, and his prospects, when we estimate the elements that entered into the constitution of such a character as he brought to the work in which he lived and died.

Naturally phlegmatic and inert, he rose to energy of action and sympathy of feeling that placed him in the front of the workers and thinkers of the Church militant. Endowed with strong sound sense, excellent judgment, clear perceptive faculties, indomitable perseverance, and high moral sensibility, he gave his whole mind to devising, and his whole soul to executing, his plans for the advancement of the Church. With no self-consciousness that made him impatient of counsel, or ambitious to lead, he sought wisdom of God and his brethren, and in simplicity submitted his judgment to others, that the best way of reaching the end might be found, and the greatest amount of means contributed to accomplish it. Too wise to be in haste, and too modest to be demonstrative, silently and slowly he matured and perfected his measures; and then, with a directness that never turned aside, and a resolute will that was deterred by no obstacle, he pressed on to accomplishment, and never knew what it was to fail. His prudence was remarkable. Resisted by many who did not adopt his theories, he bent them to his views, or conciliated their regard, so that he lived to engraft his schemes upon the Church which he served, as a constituent part of her policy, and an element of her growth.

He was a self-denying man. He might have held any post of usefulness in the Church which he desired, but without reward of man, for he gave his salary to the cause; he voluntarily took upon himself the burdens of an agency that compelled him, at the close of a week of severe and constant labour in his office, to leave the delights of a beautiful home on the banks of the Delaware, and the sweets of domestic life, in the bosom of a charming family, and go off to spend the Sabbath in the most thankless and ungracious of all services to which a Christian gentleman is ever called,—that of raising money, by personal application to the churches, for a benevolent object. But he did it, faithfully, perseveringly, and successfully. This was taking up the cross. He was willing to do anything for Christ. Once he was travelling in Virginia with one of the beneficiaries of the Church in company. They put up at a country tavern for the night; and, as they entered the chamber, its forlorn appearance extorted a disparaging remark from

the youth. "Yes," said the Doctor, "but it is better than our Master had;" and with this reflection he was soon asleep. Simple, humble, patient, toiling on, always doing, and getting others to do, cheerful and genial, he endured to the end, and earned the reward of a good and faithful servant, who has entered into the joy of his Lord.

Dr. Van Rensselaer was only fifty-two years of age. He was a son of the late Stephen Van Rensselaer, long known as the Patroon of Albany, and the owner of vast estates, on many of which the Anti-rent troubles in this State existed. He was educated at Yale College and Princeton Theological Seminary. After entering upon the ministry, he undertook a voluntary agency for the College of New Jersey, and raised $100,000 for its endowment. Being elected Secretary of the Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church, he discharged its duties with consummate ability, and by his various publications, raised the cause from deep depression to a front rank among the agencies for the advancement of the Church. He was an able writer and a judicious editor. He founded the "Presbyterian Magazine," and wrote largely for its pages. He was in the habit of seizing upon great occasions to prepare discourses, which he printed at his own expense, and disseminated widely, to spread his views and opinions, and thus impressed himself deeply on the religious community. Every year he has also compiled and published a volume on the Church, the Ministry, and the School, which he has distributed among the ministers and others, with the single object of doing good to the world.

Few men live to hear the voice of the Church on their life and works. But such was our friend's lot. He was supposed to be dying while the General Assembly of the Church to which he belonged was in session at Rochester, in May last. That body of venerable men bore their united testimony to his exalted worth; and, in expression of their gratitude for his distinguished services, they wrote him a letter and signed ALL THEIR NAMES to it, more than THREE HUNDRED of them, and sent it on for him to read before his departure. Such a testimonial no dying man ever received before!

"Beatus, terque beatus ille!"

Happy, thrice happy, he who so lives and dies.

His end was eminently befitting such a life. For many months he had been sinking with disease, and his death was anticipated from week to week; but daily was he carried out into his study, or the family rooms, or upon the verandah of his residence, that he might, as he did constantly, join with cheerfulness in all the pleasant intercourse of his family circle. The Sabbath before his death, as he lay upon his couch, he expounded two or three chapters of the Bible to his household, giving in this way his last precious instructions;* and he continued daily to join in the worship of the family. On the morning of his death he was carried out upon the verandah to enjoy the beautiful scene and the fresh air of his delightful residence on the banks of the Delaware, and while there he suddenly fell asleep: his spirit was with God.

The funeral services took place at Burlington on Monday last. A large concourse of clergymen, of different denominations, were present. The funeral discourse was preached in the Presbyterian church by Dr. Hodge, of Princeton, Drs. Plumer, Boardman, and Chester participating in the services. The bells of the City Hall and all the various churches were tolled; and during the passing of the honoured remains from his late residence to the church, and thence to the railroad station, the hotels, stores, banks, and private dwellings were closed. The remains were taken to Albany for interment in the family vault.

Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, July 26th, 1860.

We have noted, in brief terms, the death of this eminent minister of the Gospel. But there is something so remarkable in his varied excellencies, and so peculiar in the position which he occupied, that a fuller notice of such an event than is usual, seems desirable.

Dr. Van Rensselaer was a son of the late venerable General Van Rensselaer, commonly called the Patroon of Albany. The family of Van Rensselaer goes back almost to the origin of the State of New York. In 1630, two hundred and thirty years ago, Killian Van Rensselaer, a Director of the "Chamber of Amster-

* This is an unconscious error.—C. V. R.

dam," purchased from the Indian proprietors, a tract of land, embracing nearly the whole of what is now Albany and Rensselaer Counties. The first of the name who seems to have come to this country, was here in 1651. They were "Patroons" of Rensselaerwyck, a position which formerly involved much authority as well as great wealth. General Van Rensselaer was a man of great excellence of character, which descended to his son, in whom it found even larger and more liberal expansion. Dr. Van Rensselaer was, we believe, the third son of the Patroon. His elder brother is the gentleman who has been so prominent in the matter of the rent trials and riots in New York. A younger brother graduated at West Point, and has been subsequently in Congress.

Dr. Van Rensselaer, after graduating at Yale College, studied theology at Princeton Seminary. Though naturally belonging to the Reformed Dutch, he seems early to have formed an attachment to the Presbyterian Church. In the division of that body, he adhered to what is called the Old School side. He became pastor of the church at Burlington, New Jersey, where he built himself a delightful residence, which he continued to occupy after he resigned his pastoral charge, and when his office duties were in this city. He accepted the office of Secretary of the Board of Education of the Church. In this position he continued until a short time since, when he resigned it only in view of speedily approaching death.

One of the remarkable features in Dr. Van Rensselaer's character, was his indomitable and persevering industry. The great wealth to which he was born would have unstrung the nerves of most men. The motives for indolence, or, at least, for some kind of learned or elegant leisure, which does not tell much upon the immediate improvement of mankind, are very strong, and, indeed, almost irresistible, when they are sustained by a large fortune, not acquired by one's own industry, which becomes second nature, but inherited as the heirloom of many generations. But this gentleman seemed to be under a continual pressing sense of the necessity of making constant use of his time for doing good. He was not satisfied with the generosity with which he poured out benefactions to the benevolent causes of the Church. He felt that he must, in addition, give his own time, his culture, and his ener-

gies to the cause of human progress. His particular duties in the office in which he was best known, related to the bringing of young men into the ministry, and the founding of academies and colleges under the care of the Presbyterian Church. In addition to this, he founded and edited the *Presbyterian Magazine*, a monthly periodical, and brought out an Annual, entitled *The Home, School, and Church.*

Dr. Van Rensselaer's mind was rather clear and steady, than either brilliant or profound. Thoroughly educated and fond of books, he had a large mass of information which he threw out in the shape of articles, essays, and addresses. Amongst the latter we may particularize as especially excellent, that on Daniel Webster, and the one delivered at the Anniversary of the Taking of Ticonderoga.

Dr. Van Rensselaer had a special taste for history. He was Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Presbyterian Historical Society, and one of its most active and efficient members. It was almost alone in this way that his friends knew that he cherished earnestly the recollections of the past, for no man, perhaps, occupying such a position, ever spoke less of family distinctions. But in all that is great in the past, in Church and State, he felt a kindling enthusiasm, which might well be shared by all his compatriots.

Dr. Van Rensselaer was plain and modest in demeanour, as he was great in soul. Few men, as they saw him hurrying up or down Chestnut Street, carpet-bag in hand, that he might crowd the greatest amount of work into the one day then given him, would have thought that he was meeting a man of one of the oldest and most distinguished families in America; a man of independent wealth; and one of the very foremost divines in influence in one of our most powerful churches. The sight, if they had known him, would have been edifying to some of our insignificant dandies.

Dr. Van Rensselaer was very catholic in his spirit. He was very decided, indeed, in his attachment to his own views, and was ready enough to break a lance for his special theological and ecclesiastical tenets, as well as for his special opinions on matters of general interest. He was, for example, a moderate anti-slavery man, and wrote ably on the subject. But, at the same time, he

had a sincere regard for all Christians. A striking illustration, both of his liberality and of his moral courage, a virtue in which he largely excelled, was a eulogy which he pronounced upon his neighbour, Bishop Doane, at Burlington, at a time when many of the Bishop's own Church hesitated to speak well of him. Mingled, too, with this charity and courage, was much geniality of character, so that intercourse with him was always agreeable. He was *emphatically* a gentleman.

The piety of Dr. Van Rensselaer was his crowning virtue. For some months, he had been satisfied that he must die, and with perfect composure, he "set his house in order," and commended his spirit to the great Redeemer of men. Never was there more calmness in view of death; never, perhaps, a quieter preparation for it. He has died, an illustrious specimen of the "triple nobility of nature, culture, and faith." He has shown that if "not many noble" are Christians, there are still some such. An example vividly bright, for few have such a position as he, and few have so occupied such a position as to blend in one the glories of both earth and heaven.

Pacific Expositor, October, 1860.

Our readers have all heard of the death of this distinguished man and eminent servant of Christ. For ourselves we must say that we have seldom thought of him for several years past without calling to mind Homer's line concerning Ulysses:

"Thou living glory of the Grecian name."

We have only to substitute *Presbyterian* for *Grecian* in this line, and we have our estimate of Dr. Van Rensselaer; indeed it seems to us that this is the light in which the whole Church regarded him. The following tribute to his memory is from the pen of Rev. Dr. Burrowes of this city.*—*Editor.*

It is with the heart filled with sorrow and the eye dim with tears that we record his death. The dealings of Providence with

* San Francisco, California.

our Church during the past year, have struck deep into the hearts of all within our bounds. Yet do we look to these repeated strokes of bereaving love with mingled emotions of grief and gladness;—grief that our brotherhood have lost such genial spirits, and the cause of Jesus such generous servants,—gladness that our Church has been honoured by producing such sons, and they were spared even so long to labour for the glory of Jesus Christ. Nine-and-thirty of our ministry have been called away during the past year;—among them Dr. Addison Alexander, second in ability and learning to no man in the political or religious world; Dr. James W. Alexander, combining the varied qualities and attainments of the Christian and scholar, that placed him in the first rank of undershepherds of our Lord; Hope, useful and beloved in the professor's chair; the venerable Neill, the model of a finished Christian;—all these, and last, not least, he for whom we now mourn, have been gathered from our midst as jewels for the Redeemer's crown. That system of Church doctrine and policy must certainly possess great excellence which, through the grace of God, could develop itself in such characters as these excellent men. That Church may well look up with thankfulness in the midst of tears, which can still feel that though she has no worthier sons than these, there are many still left who are worthy to stand by their side as compeers. Well may we rejoice in our sorrow when we feel that any Church can afford to lose such men, and still stand in the glory of a heaven-born beauty and strength.

Among these names, none is written in such deep characters of affection on the heart of our Church at large as that of Cortlandt Van Rensselaer. He was the son of the Hon. Stephen Van Rensselaer, of Albany; and was born in that city May 26th, 1808. He graduated at Yale College in 1827. He was admitted to the Bar, in New York, in 1830; but abandoned that profession for the ministry, and entered the Theological Seminary at Princeton in the fall of the same year. He was ordained to the Gospel ministry in 1835; and began his labours in the ministry by preaching to the coloured people in Virginia. He was for some years pastor of the Presbyterian church in Burlington, New Jersey. He was appointed Secretary of the Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in 1846; and continued in that important and laborious post till the end of his life.

Dr. Van Rensselaer always appeared a remarkable instance of the sovereignty of God, and of the ease with which divine love can, at will, depart from the ordinary modes of operation in the method of grace. "Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 19 : 23. Yet born of one of the wealthiest families, reared among the influences which only ruin so many youth, and himself heir to a large fortune, he became a true and humble Christian, and consecrated all he possessed to the service of his adored Lord. His natural endowments were of a high order. There are men who may surpass him in some particular specialty. Few have equalled him in that aggregate of substantial abilities which, combined, constitute the most enviable of God's gifts to man. He was a faithful and able preacher:—few so instructive and suggestive. A sound and sober judgment; a strong and vigorous grasp of mind; a mental constitution, pitched in unison with evangelical truth, and assimilating it almost without a struggle or a doubt, free from proclivity towards Utopian metaphysical fancies, and gravitating naturally to the common sense level of views and things; a heart of the greatest natural benevolence, filled with the overflowing influences of the spirit of holiness and love;—all these, besides the gifts of fortune and position, and the education they supply, fitted him for building up a character and wielding an influence that few can hope to attain. He could be no common man who, in a Church like ours, distinguished for the culture and learning of her sons, could take the position and exert the control held by our lamented friend. In their letter to the dying man, our General Assembly say: "We cannot accept your resignation of the important office you have just relinquished, without bearing our formal and grateful testimony to the manner in which its duties have been performed. With devout thankfulness to God, and under Him, beloved brother, to you, we record our sense of the eminent wisdom, fidelity and efficiency, and the noble, disinterested liberality, with which you have for fourteen years conducted the affairs of our 'Board of Education.' Under your administration it has arisen, from a condition of comparative feebleness, to strength and power. Its plans have been matured and systematized. Its sphere has been greatly enlarged. It has assumed new and most beneficent functions. Your luminous pen has vindicated the principles which lie at the

basis of true Christian education. And by your numerous publications, your sermons and addresses, your extended correspondence, and your self-denying activity in visiting every part of the Church, you have, by God's blessing, accomplished a great work in elevating this sacred cause to its just position, and gathering around it the sympathies of our whole communion. Nor may we forbear to add, that in prosecuting these manifold official labours, you have greatly endeared yourself personally to the ministry and membership of the Church."

Any man who would grow up into his character amid the influences that surround him, must possess great natural excellences and receive rich communications of divine grace. He enjoyed both. His natural disposition was lovely, generous, self-renouncing, and winning. These traits were developed by high culture; and to them was added, when education had done its utmost, the crowning influence of the Holy Spirit. He was all the accomplished gentleman can be in the best use of independent means; and he was all the humble Christian can become in the enjoyment of the grace of God's Holy Spirit. Such a combination of influences makes the noblest type of man. We use no other than the language of unexaggerated truth when we say that such was Dr. Van Rensselaer. He was a model of a rich man and a Christian. Starting from the same point, and the same influences, where he started, how many have, even at the best, spent lives of fashionable selfishness, and died the worldling's death. He too could have lived a life of Sybarite ease, and have lavished his wealth on splendid villas and specious though corroding pleasures.

He chose a different part. No man in the Church lived a life of more laborious toil in the service of the Lord Jesus. In the duties of his office he was indefatigable. I have seen him in the coldest weather of midwinter, encountering the discomfort of long stage rides, when cold and storms made the exposure trying to the best constitution. All was cheerfully endured. He did not seem to think he was making any sacrifice, or was doing anything unusual. On the steamboat his portfolio was with him, and he gave no rest even there to his pen. His annual reports, so carefully written and possessing a permanent value, the annual volume issued on topics of education, the matter contributed to his Magazine, together with various addresses and the correspondence inse-

parable from his office,—all entailed a great amount of labour. He has placed our Board of Education in a position it never before occupied. His weight of character and influence made him invaluable in the position he occupied among our candidates for the ministry, at the head of our Board of Education. His simple presence in that post, the unspoken influence going forth among those young men from a controlling heart like his, exerted an imperceptible but real power in elevating the whole tone of piety and feeling in those brought into the sacred office under his pastoral care. One of the things we always valued highly in Dr. Van Rensselaer in this position, was the power he silently exerted, and which is so eminently needed, of leavening our rising ministry with a spirit of courtesy, no less than piety, kindred with his own. The aim of this Board, when he assumed its duties, was the education of candidates for the ministry. He greatly increased his labours by including the care of schools, academies, and colleges under ecclesiastical control. Up to the last, even when unable himself to hold the pen, in the sick-room, on the sick-bed, did this good servant continue his unwearied exertions in the cause of Christ. Still a gentleman of independent means, he gave all these services gratuitously, and largely of his own means to the great interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom.

He gave more than this. He gave his own life also to the service of Jesus. He died in the fulness of his prime, worn out by his great and unremitting labours. Had he taken more rest he would have lived longer. His death was a fitting close to such a life. Among his last acts was the starting of our educational enterprise on this Pacific coast. His strong mind, his far-seeing sagacity, and his large heart had long inclined him to do something for this new State. He was enabled to give the first impulse and see the work successfully begun. In his death, the cause of education in California has lost a devoted and efficient friend.

The Church he had served so faithfully, had a just appreciation of his labours. With one soul, amid deep emotion and many tears, our last General Assembly,—a body of men unsurpassed for talent and excellence by any on earth,—paid to this dying brother, worn out in their service, honours which our Church has never paid to any other man. A letter to him from this body, thanking him

for his services, was read amid a silence unbroken save by sobs and tears,—the whole body rising to their feet, and the patriarch pastor, Dr. Spring, leading in prayer. And not only every one of the three hundred members of that body, but every one of the three thousand ministers and hundreds of thousands of church members they represented from every State in this Union, felt that this act, so richly merited by the dying, conferred no less honour on themselves.

Here, on this far Pacific coast, thousands of miles away from their old homes and the churches of their childhood beyond the distant mountains, on these frontiers of civilization, the news of his illness filled many hearts with sorrow; earnest prayers were offered for the good servant of our Lord far away on the bed of suffering; and when at last the tidings of his death, though long expected, came, there fell at the memory of the departed many heavy tears.

As we turn away from his grave to the labours and duties of life, we do so with deep thankfulness for such a gift of God as this good man to our Church; for all that he was spared to accomplish; for the legacy of his example and his influence long to endure. We cannot take up the spirit of the Spartan's epitaph and say,—The Church has many a worthier son than he. The Church has no worthier son than he. And we shall feel it the greatest of blessings, will the same Holy Spirit who made him what he was, raise up and endow for our bereaved brotherhood and the Church of Christ, another who may possess his endowments of nature and grace, and fill the sphere he occupied, with the same energy and influence of love.

"When faith and love, which parted from thee never,
Had ripened thy just soul to dwell with God,
Meekly thou didst resign this earthly load,
Of death, called life; which us from life doth sever.
Thy works, and alms, and all thy good endeavour,
Stayed not behind, nor in the grave were trod;
But as Faith pointed with her golden rod,
Followed thee up to joy and bliss forever.
Love led them on, and Faith, who knew them best,
Thy handmaids, clad them o'er with purple beams
And azure wings, that up they flew so drest,
And spake the truth of thee on glorious themes
Before the Judge, who thenceforth bid thee rest,
And drink thy fill of pure immortal steams."